

Development Without Displacement & Housing Preservation

Tenants Union of Washington State

Jonathan Grant, Executive Director

Housing Crisis: Call it what it is.



Tenants march through Ballard demanding affordability for the first time in over ten years.

Big Picture on Affordability

- Seattle Rents shot up 4.1% in last quarter alone.
- Ballard neighborhood hit hardest: Average rent 12.3% higher over the same period of time.
- Last year Seattle had highest rent increases in the nation.

**All data as reported in the Seattle Times.*

Myth of Supply & Demand

- *Econ 101: When there is a high demand, to bring down prices increase supply.*
- Yet, Ballard has the highest vacancy rate at 8.6%, *and* the highest rents.
- Last year Seattle had the highest rent increases, *and* brought more units online than any other year over 20 years.
- Supply is going up... and so are the rents.
- Why?

**All data as reported in the Seattle Times.*

What is affordable?

- Rent is considered affordable when rent is no more than 30% of your income.
- A person in Seattle earning the current minimum wage would need to work **92 hours per week** to afford a market rate 2-bedroom unit.
- Average Seattle rent is \$1,284. How much supply is needed to bring rents down \$662 a month; the rent that a person on a fixed income at 30% AMI could afford?
- Even at the new \$15/wage, over 80% of tenants at this income level are cost burdened by their rent.

Causes of Rising Rents

- Speculation & Predatory Acquisitions
 - Expiring Use Restrictions
 - Expiring Federal Subsidies
 - Luxury Conversion
 - Condo Conversion

Theodora & Lockhaven Apartments



Key Policy Concerns

- State prohibition on regulating rents
- Weak just cause protections
- Loopholes in relocation assistance
- Insufficient data on the rental market
- Decentralized tracking of use-restricted and below market housing, lack of conversion notice
- Insufficient tools to allow tenants or non-profits to purchase housing first
- Costly fees that drain limited Housing Levy funds